
The Newsletter of the Columbia-Greene Rip Van Winkle Chapter #569 of Trout Unlimited

TU...TO CONSERVE, PROTECT & RESTORE NORTH AMERICA'S COLD WATER FISHERIES & THEIR WATERSHEDS

WHO IS THE GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER????

The guest speaker could be me...it could be you...or it could be all of us. After the meeting we are going to set aside time for everyone who is interested to share a personal fishing adventure they experienced this season.

I didn't think of this myself...the credit goes to two other people. The first one is my wife, Linda. After an educational committee meeting at our home in July she said, "Boy! All of you really have a good time talking about your new fishing stories with each other since the last time you were together!" That comment reminded me of a suggestion Bob Story made last year of telling some of our short fishing adventures, sharing a learning experience, or offering a new idea for The Current each month.

This month we will combine both these thoughts and provide informal time for anyone interested in sharing. Your stories can even be TRUE! Ron (Baumann), you might want to tell everyone about the trout you caught June 15th!

Hank

PERSONALS

John LaRocca, our fellow Trout Unlimited member and author of our newsletter's "Fish Tails and Fish Tails", underwent quadruple bypass surgery in July. He is healing well and expects to be back at work in September. **Our best wishes to John for continued healing and a fast recovery.**

Everett Nack, the guest speaker at our February meeting who shared his knowledge of the Hudson River, was involved in a very serious car accident in July and succumbed to his injuries August 9, 2004. Everett was an expert on the Hudson River and its ecology. He was well-known, well-liked and well-respected in the community. He will be sorely missed. **We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Nack Family and all Everett's loved ones.**

WELCOME NEW, TRANSFERRED and RENEWED MEMBERS

Whatever your membership status, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the Columbia-Greene Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Chapter #569, this fall. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at O'Brien's Restaurant on Route 23B in Leeds, NY, September through June.

We are a small informal group. Many of us arrive at O'Brien's about 7:00 P.M. for a social gathering of drinks and conversation before we start our meeting. Each month we try to have a speaker or other entertainment. During the fall and early months of 2004 we had the following folks enlighten us:

Wendy Neefus, a well-known Columbia County fly fisher and fly tier, gave us an animated fly tying demonstration.

Sal Cozzolino, a 41-year employee of the NYSDEC (now retired), presented us with an intriguing evening about deer.

Fran Martino, the Environmental Educator for the Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc., told us about some of their interesting programs.

Everett Nack, "the man" who knows the Hudson River by being involved with it for most of his life as a commercial and pleasure fisherman, gave us a vivid and poignant tour of it.

Kevin Henebry, owner of the Ausable River Sport Shop in upstate NY, guided us through the Ausable River, arguably one of New York's finest trout streams.

Dan Zielinski, an aquatic biologist, gave us an interesting presentation of a long-term research program continuing on the Catskill Creek.

Bill Newcomb demonstrated his innovative dragonfly.

Walt Bennett updated us on expected improvements on the Tenmile Creek.

Either a power point presentation or a slide projector show accompanied many of these programs. They were really terrific nights and we're glad that we did not miss a single one.

The efforts for providing you with entertainment and education are a continuing process and new speakers are being lined up for the future. If you have any ideas for folks who can provide the chapter with presentations, they would be most welcome. Maybe you or a friend or relative or neighbor has stories, adventures, movies, slides or special interests that could be presented to our group. If so, please contact Hank or me so that a program can be scheduled for a chapter meeting night.

We encourage you to attend the meetings, get acquainted with other members, socialize and exchange stories of "the big one that got away". **We are instituting a new program this fall for everyone who attends the meetings. At every meeting a FREE door prize will be awarded to some lucky person. The first one will be given September 21, 2004. Wendy Neefus has generously offered to donate some of his hand tied flies for that night. This incentive will continue for the rest of the year. Others who are interested in providing prizes can bring them to a monthly meeting.**

No matter what your level of fishing expertise, you are welcome to attend and participate in any of the meetings that you can. They are open to the public so, if you are feeling a little shy, bring a friend. It is not necessary to be a TU member to attend.

Our chapter writes and distributes this newsletter, The Current, from September to June. As a member of C-GTU, you are entitled to receive a copy. Since we are a small chapter, we attempt

to save money in various ways. One way is for us to send you the newsletter by e-mail, so, **if we do not already have an e-mail address for you, please send it to Hank Theiss newsletter@cgtu.org, or Dick Riccio newsletter@cgtu.org for future mailings.** We will try to protect your privacy as much as we can by sending it to you without revealing the other recipients who get it. We accomplish that by sending it as a “bcc” in Outlook Express.

This chapter is your group. We hope that you will attend as many meetings (which are usually short) as you feel you can. Even if you do not like gatherings, we think you will enjoy the guest presenters and hopefully develop new friends with similar interests in fishing and environmental concerns.

Dick and Hank

FROM THE EDITORS: THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

“We do not stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

La ROCCA’S CORNER – “Fish Tails & Fish Tales”

May was a rainy month in the Northeast, and the rivers and creeks had more water than they have had in recent years. As late as Memorial Day there were still wonderfully high water levels on many of our streams, and that meant good fishing prospects. On my way to work on the Thursday morning before Memorial Day I was leaning on Kellam’s Bridge over Tenmile Creek peering into its rushing murky water. Fellow TU chapter member Dave drove by behind me and just had to stop; a moment later there were two trouters peering into the water. “On one of the best days I ever had on this creek the water looked like that...have you seen the photo of Hank’s fish?...some big trout over in that creek,” said Dave, and he was off to work.

JUNGLE FATIGUES

Later that day I was on the Tenmile. My outing began with a spirited conversation with Gene Kellam, long time neighbor, friend, and retired Soil and Water Conservation Service director. Gene was photographing the lovely stand of wild phlox that dominates the wooded edges of the creek on his property adjacent to the fisherman’s access point. He spoke of how the Tenmile had changed – not for the better – over the years. His words did not encourage me (I had not caught a trout yet this season), but thought that I actually might on this trip. “Nothing ventured, obviously, nothing gained,” I said to myself as I waved goodbye to Gene. “And it is a beautiful day!”

I waded up under the bridge a few feet; my first cast produced a hard strike on the trailing Prince Nymph and my first trout of the season, an eleven-inch brown. My mood changed to minor excitement, and got progressively better with each of the five trout which took my Prince and Hare’s Ear Nymphs that afternoon, three browns and two rainbows. Off-color water is such a boon to novices like me!

After two months of virtually commuting weekly to Los Angeles, I felt I was entitled to a four day Memorial Day Weekend. Friday morning I spent a few hours in the garden (after a quick trip to Delmar to check in with our new home builder) and then headed for Windham to check out the Batavia Kill. I had never fished it seriously, but there are “some big trout over in that creek”. I drove through Windham, craned my neck from the driver’s seat to check out the water wherever the creek came close to the road, and ended up at a bridge parking area like that on the Tenmile. The water was bank-full, off color, trouty looking! In minutes I was on a long gravel bar forty yards above the bridge stripping line and rolling a Hare’s Ear toward the clay bank at the top of the run. On cast number two of this excursion, a beefy thirteen-inch brown grabbed the fly and came reluctantly in on the gravel. I never seem to have my net when I could really use it, but this was shaping up into a nice weekend.

After working my way down the rest of the bar without another hit, I stood on the end of the gravel methodically steering my nymph through the last of the fast water before the run curled into the bridge pool. “Hey captain!” The voice startled me, and I turned and squinted into the sun toward the bridge. “What is that branch insignia...Military Intelligence?” I’d forgotten I was wearing an old jungle fatigue shirt, one of a couple of the great warm weather, long sleeve, big pocket uniform tops I’d saved for just this purpose. The backlit voice from the bridge started talking about his tour spent ten kilometers north of An Loc near the Fishhook area of Cambodia. I’d done my time in An Loc thirty-five years ago. I just listened, started to say a couple of things, but instead just kept laying out casts and high-sticking the fly through the deepest part of the run. After five minutes or so the line came to a solid stop and I set the hook. “Whoa, that’s a good fish!” said the silhouette on the bridge. And it was...a fifteen inch brown, even more beefy than the first. “That’s a holdover,” came the commentary. I released the fish and looked up. “Have a great day; I’m going upstream.” I parted company with the friendly vet, and over my shoulder heard the car door close and he drove away.

I fished another couple of hours, picking up just one more small fish. I was distracted. “You should have asked him,” I said to myself, “What do you think about Iraq?...What do you think about this generation’s war?...Why can’t we seem to learn?...Do you agree that this one is a quagmire just like ours?...Are you as angry about it as I am?”

The rest of the afternoon was not quite the same; my thoughts floated away from the water many times. They would dedicate the World War II Memorial the next day or the day after that...probably the last just war. Hindsight, of course, is 20-20, but how many lives to “stop communism”...it collapsed by itself...lines in the sand...a war to stop terrorism. The terrorists won it already: I read today that New York City passed a law making it illegal to take a photograph in the subway! We have to figure out a better way; arrogance and might are not going to cut it. In the workshops that I do for a living I am fond of quoting (or at least attributing the words to) Albert Einstein on a definition of insanity: *doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result*. The box in today’s USA Today showed eight soldiers killed. There is not a box marking casualties among the natives. We have to stop...leave...get out.

In spite of these troubling – to say the least – considerations and private (now somewhat public) sentiments, it was a great weekend. From a fishing perspective, Sunday wrapped it up with the

delivery of the “opening day event” I promised my granddaughter Sophie. It played out exactly as envisioned in my last column. Sunday morning was beautifully clear and calm, and we could count dozens of bluegills in the shallow pond. Sophie caught six or eight including a few all by herself. Three swallowed the hook, went into the bucket and died (she did not understand that). When we got home, Grampy John “cut off their faces” (she did not watch) and scaled and filleted them. I breaded and fried the few tiny fillets that resulted, and to my amazement Sophie even ate some of the fish!

And the next day, after a delightful couple of hours watching a parade in Delmar with Sophie and her little sister Ellie, we all learned that Sophie was absolutely convinced that Smarty Jones is a person, not a horse! Peace.

HANK'S FLY BOX – Red Fox Squirrel Nymph

A few months ago Wendy Neefus gave me a few flies. He said he and his fishing buddy, Tom Starace, had good luck with them on the Schoharie. They were Red Fox Squirrel Nymphs...a fly originated by Dave Whitlock 30 or more years ago. In 1988 Dave redesigned it as an all-purpose nymph, similar to the ever-popular Gold-Ribbed Hare’s Ear. When tied in larger sizes it can represent a golden stonefly nymph.

Three interesting things about Mr. Whitlock’s nymph are:

1. It looks the same whether it is right side up or upside down.
2. The rich orange-tan color makes it look very much like many of the nymphs I see in my entomology books.
3. It is simple to tie.

Red-fox-squirrel pelt is somewhat hard to find. I appreciated Wendy ordering me some from Feather-Craft Fly Fishing: 307 Manchester Road PO Box 19904 St. Louis, MO 63144
Website: www.feather-craft.com 1-800-659-1707

The recipe I use follows:

RED FOX SQUIRREL NYMPH

Hook: Heavy wire 2X or 3X long, size 8 – 18 (Mustad 9671)

Thread: Black or reddish brown

Weight: Lead wire or substitute (Optional)

Tail: Red-fox-squirrel back guard hair and underfur

Rib: Fine or medium gold tinsel, oval or flat

Abdomen: A blend of one part red-fox-squirrel belly fur and one part similar shade of antron dubbing.

Thorax: Red-fox-squirrel back guard hair and underfur

Tying Instructions:

1. Dress the hook with black thread. Add lead or substitute if you want it weighted.
2. Snip a tuft of guard hair and fur (matchstick size) from the back portion of a red-fox-squirrel pelt. Tie in the tuft at the bend as a tail.
3. Tie in the tinsel, silver side up, at the bend. Dub a tapered abdomen and wind it up

- 2/3 of the shank.
4. Wind the tinsel over the abdomen in 4 or 5 equidistant turns, and tie off.
 5. Dub a rough, full thorax of guard hair and fur from a red-fox-squirrel back. I prefer to touch dub the thread and spin a dubbing loop.
 6. Form a head and whip finish.

THANK YOU BOB STORY! for donating squirrel tails and deer hair. They will come in especially handy now that we have revised our fly tying class to include the Muddler Minnow, a fly that uses both these materials.

EVERY MONTH: Our regularly scheduled meetings are the **3rd Tuesday of each month (except July and August)** unless otherwise indicated. We meet at 7:30 p.m. at O'Brien's Restaurant on Route 23B in Leeds, NY.

THIS MONTH: Tuesday, September 21, 2004

NEXT MONTH: Tuesday, October 19, 2004

COLUMBIA-GREENE RIP VAN WINKLE CHAPTER #569 OF TROUT UNLIMITED
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Keep current...with The Current! Dick & Hank (CO-EDITORS)